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ABSTRACT

In 1991, the Oregon State Legislature passed the Educational Act for the 21st Century. Since then, schools around the state have reacted in a variety of ways in an attempt to meet or avoid the law's requirements. A survey of schools and focus-group data from 18 Oregon schools were used to examine the policy articulation process from three perspectives: the effectiveness of state mandates in education reform, school-level change in education reform, and the coherence of the two approaches together. Implementation of the early stages of the reform act has taken place during severe budgetary stress in many parts of the state due to a statewide property tax limitation. The research indicated that, in general, educators were positive toward the concepts included in the statewide reform effort. More than 90 percent thought that the law was designed to restructure education and to increase student success. Many believed that the law would be implemented because many students were not being served and fundamental change was needed. Over time, there has been little change in educators' attitudes toward school reform as a state-wide movement. Instead, teachers take a highly functional approach and view school reform in terms of their own buildings and their own needs. (Contains 54 references.) (JPT)

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School Responses to State-Level Restructuring Legislation

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Research Problem and Research Context

How are teachers in Oregon reacting to state-level education reform legislation two years after it was passed? How have attitudes at selected schools changed? What factors shape or influence receptivity to systemic change at the school site level? Teacher responses to legislatively mandated school restructuring allow us to consider these issues. In 1991, the Oregon state Legislature passed a far reaching "Educational Act for the 21st Century" that promised to alter profoundly public elementary and secondary schools by the end of the century. In a series of studies (Conley, Goldman, & Dunlap, 1993a; Conley, Goldman, & Dunlap, 1993b; Goldman & Conley, 1993) we have been exploring the issue of whether and how such legislation becomes a viable, enacted program at the school district and school building levels.

Few schools are rushing to implement all parts of the Act, yet a large number of schools appear to be moving quickly to make changes in one or more areas. Other schools are reacting more slowly and are directing efforts to meeting minimum legal requirements; still others are virtually ignoring the legislation. What differentiates these schools and districts from one another? We report here on follow up survey data from 24 schools

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collected during October, 1993 and focus group data from 18 Oregon schools gathered during January and February, 1994. These schools were purposively selected from a larger group of 92 schools that had been surveyed between October and December, 1992.

These data allow us to consider the policy articulation process in Oregon from three conceptual perspectives: the first focuses on the effectiveness of state mandates as the engines of education reform, while the second looks at school level change as the engine reform. The third approach, examining policy coherence, attempts to integrate the first two. While each of these approaches can, and should be assessed across and between individual states' restructuring policy, at some level analysis must take into account the unique policy context that exists inside each state. Oregon is a particularly good example of this dynamic.

The Context of Educational Reform in Oregon

Overview of H.B. 3565

When the Oregon Legislature passed H.B. 3565 in June, 1991, it established a new vision of schooling for the state's 1,200 public elementary and secondary schools. Oregon's educators were neither prepared for, nor participated in, the development of this legislation. Instead, their attention had been focused on the state's recently enacted tax limitation measure, and its implications for education funding. Oregon's reform legislation is far reaching, encompassing policies from early childhood to post secondary education, from accountability to school governance. The Act presents a complex framework for systemic redesign of education, preschool through postsecondary. Some of the most important and potentially influential sections of the Act include the following:

- The intention of the Act is to create a "restructured educational system...to achieve the state's goals of the best educated citizens in the nation by the year 2000 and a work force equal to any in the world by the year 2010." There is an emphasis on an educated citizenry and a high-quality work force.
- The Act outlines a success-oriented educational system that begins with students who enter kindergarten ready to learn. It establishes as state policy the intention to implement "programs for early childhood education including prenatal care, parenting education, child-parent centers, and...prekindergarten programs." It sets a 1998 goal for full funding of prekindergarten programs for all eligible children.
- The use of nongraded primary classrooms, where children of several years of age are taught together, is to be explored. The emphasis is on creating success-based primary programs where failure is avoided. In combination with expanded preschool programs, the primary classroom will enhance success for essentially all children through the use of teaching and grouping strategies appropriate to the developmental level of the child, not just his or her chronological age.
- The largest changes in the structure of schooling occur at the high school level, where the traditional four-year program will be broken into two separate programs, the Certificate of Initial Mastery (CIM) and the Certificate of Advanced Mastery (CAM). Every student will have the opportunity to obtain the CIM by age sixteen or the end of 10th grade.

  To obtain a CIM a student must demonstrate "the capacity to learn, think, reason, retrieve information and work effectively alone and in groups." Additionally, students must have the "knowledge and skills to read, write, problem solve, think critically and communicate across the disciplines, at national levels by the year 2000 and at international levels by the year 2010." Assessment must include "a series of performance-based assessments benchmarked to mastery levels at approximately grades 3, 5, 8, and 10 including but not limited to work samples, tests and portfolios...culminating in a project or exhibition that demonstrates attainment of required knowledge and skills."
- The Certificate of Advanced Mastery (CAM) leads to a college preparatory, a academic professional technical endorsement, or both, in one of six "broad occupational categories." Mastery must be demonstrated here as well through performance-based means. The requirements for the CAM must be designed to "facilitate the movement between the endorsements and shall encourage choice and mobility so as to enhance a student's opportunities to maximize exposure to the full range of educational experiences." The curriculum must include "opportunities for structured work experiences, cooperative work and study programs, on-the-job training and apprenticeship programs in addition to other subjects." The certificate must also include "a comprehensive educational component."
- The Act contains numerous provisions defining how help and assistance will be provided to students who are not succeeding in public education. Included are requirements that schools identify in the primary years students who are not succeeding and attempt alternative instructional approaches with those students, along with provisions for identifying and providing comprehensive support to at-risk students through alternative learning centers. Social service agencies are required to coordinate their services with those of the public schools, and to offer them at the site closest to the client. For students who leave school before receiving a CIM, learning centers will offer "teaching strategies, technology, and curricula that emphasize the latest research and best practice" to help them obtain their CIM.
- Enhanced public accountability for education is achieved through the Oregon Report Card, a comprehensive report on performance on a school-by-school basis, an increase in visits from external accreditation teams, local school and district self-evaluations every two years, and increased parental involvement.

- 21st Century Schools Councils are mandated by September, 1995 in every school. Teachers will form a majority. Parent and classified employees must be represented, as well. These councils have responsibilities related to school goals, measures of effective teaching and learning, and allocation of grants for staff development. These committees will oversee the development and implementation of a plan to improve professional growth and career opportunities for the school's staff, to improve the school's instructional program, and to assure the implementation of the requirements of this Act.
- The Act contains provisions for lengthening the school day to 185 days in 1996, 200 days in the year 2000, and 220 days by 2010.

Oregon's reforms are <u>not</u> incremental changes that will be implemented gradually and sequentially year by year from early childhood to secondary education. In this regard they differ fundamentally from legislation in other states. The Oregon legislation's emphasis on secondary education departs dramatically from major reform efforts elsewhere that have mandated changes first and foremost in primary education. The best examples of those approaches are Kentucky's Education Reform Act (KERA) (Steffy, 1993), and British Columbia's Year 2000 program (now in a period of retrenchment)(British Columbia, 1993). H.B. 3565's author and primary sponsor, Vera Katz, had been deeply influenced by National Center for Education and the Economy's report "America's Choice: High Skills or Low Wages" (1990) which dealt explicitly with high schools and school to work transition. Consequently, the Act emphasizes two performance and skill-based milestones, the CIM and the CAM. These certificates are designed to cause elementary and middle schools to design <u>downwards</u> from the performance standards students must meet to obtain the certificates. Schools must adapt their programs to the performance requirements of the CIM and the CAM.

There is an urgency in the bill's language and it has been enhanced by the energy and actions of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, a career politician determined to use her office to move beyond educational rhetoric to changes in the classroom. Hence, Oregon would seem to

provide a strong test of a state's capacity to mandate fundamental educational reform. What is not yet known is how, and how broadly, educators make meaning of this type of reform legislation, and whether and how their meanings become new programs and practices in school districts, buildings, and classrooms.

Making Meaning of H.B. 3565

One way in which H.B. 3565 was radically different from the education-related legislation passed by the Oregon Legislature historically was that it was a vision, not a blueprint, for reform. Previous legislation tended to be rather detailed in its requirements for educators and instructions for implementation and compliance. By contrast, the Act mandated relatively few specific things that educators had to do; they were to redesign their programs to respond to the new vision. The framework for operationalizing the vision were the yet-to-be-designed outcomes or standards for the CIM and CAM. The programs to achieve these outcomes were to be designed by educators on a school-by-school basis.

Educators are not accustomed to such a charge. Many have come to function as street-level bureaucrats (Lipsky, 1980), more concerned with following procedures and conforming to contractual obligations than with achieving broad system goals. If not bureaucrats, then many educators are not systems thinkers; they define success primarily in terms of what happens in their own school or classroom. Accountability in education has been defined as offering students an opportunity to learn, not ensuring that learning occurred in relation to any clear standard. Given this somewhat overwhelming new paradigm of teaching and learning, many educators chose to wait, either for reform to go away, or to be told what to do.

The Department of Education mounted a large-scale effort to define the various elements of the law. Ten task forces were commissioned, involving over 300 Oregon educators and citizens. Each task force was charged with defining in greater detail one aspect of the law. The task forces addressed the following elements:

- Certificate of Initial Mastery
- Certificate of Advanced Mastery
- Site-Based Decision Making
- Non-Graded Primary Education
- Middle Level Education
- Alternative Learning Environments
- School Choice
- Integration of Social Services
- Extended School Day/Year
- Employment of Minors (Oregon Department of Education, 1993)

The work of the task forces did not result in detailed descriptions that educators could use to redesign educational programs. Instead, the report that the Board of Education issued in January, 1993 contained general statements of principle or policy related to each of the topics. Examples from two task forces serve to illustrate:

Certificate of Initial Mastery Task Force:

The State Board has adopted the following positions on the Certificate of Initial Mastery:

1. The State Board must set uniform, statewide performance standards for the CIM, while maximizing local district freedom to design programs that prepare students to meet the standards.(Oregon Department of Education, 1993, p. 14)

Certificate of Advanced Mastery Task Force:

The State Board holds the following positions on the Certificate of Advanced Mastery:

1. To earn a Certificate of Advanced Mastery, students must meet high-performance outcome standards that emphasize the application of knowledge

> and skills in varied, realistic environments. These standards may also include requirements for a project that embodies a values/citizenship component. (Oregon Department of Education, 1993, p. 16)

This type of general policy definition, while necessary, was not enough to spur many schools to action. Most administrators and teachers were still waiting for more specific guidance, or clearer instructions regarding what it was exactly that they were supposed to change in their teaching or their programs. In other words, the law was viewed by many from the perspective of compliance, not of opportunity or even responsibility. As might be reasonably predicted, educators' first reaction was to translate this mandate for systems redesign into a series of incremental adaptations of the current system. They awaited technicist solutions and prescriptions.

This reaction can be understood in part if one takes into account the unique fashion in which H.B. 3565 was created. The law, in fact, contained a reprioritizing of the values and goals of public education, along with a reconception of the responsibility of educators relative to those goals. Most legislation that implies or requires a reshaping of the values or goals of social systems and public institutions usually is accompanied by a long period of consensus-seeking, where the ideas in the legislation are examined and debated by the various interest groups affected. A larger public discussion often accompanies this process, as elected officials and the citizenry at large interact to determine the degree to which there is any consensus regarding the proposed new values and goals for the institution in question. In a democracy this process sometimes takes years. When it works properly the resulting product has a level of support within the population as a whole that allows its successful implementation. The debate on health care that is occurring throughout 1993 and 1994 is an example of such a process.

By way of contrast, H.B. 3565 was written, debated, and passed in a period of several months by a legislature preoccupied with a fiscal crisis generated by a property tax limitation. There was little interchange or compromise in its development. Many of the key players gave only grudging support. It was possible to do this at least in part because the bill did not have detailed requirements that schools would have to follow (and at least in part because its timelines did not require any major changes for five years after passage of the bill). House Bill 3565 sparked the policy debate about the proper goals of public education that had not been enjoined before the legislation was passed. The reactions of Oregon educators should be viewed in this context.

Effects of Reduction in School Funding

Concurrent with these attempts at policy elaboration and definition, another piece of legislation was also being implemented. Measure 5, a property tax limitation initiative that had passed in November, 1991 was also gradually taking effect. This measure lowered local property tax rates, decreasing them each year until fully implemented in 1996.

Many had assumed that the Legislature would take the opportunity of the 1993 session to come up with a solution to this drastic decrease in state revenues. Implementation effects during the first two years had been muted, in part due to a slower rate of reduction during these years combined with soaring assessed valuations for real estate.

In fact, approximately 100 school districts out of the 300 in the state actually received some amount of increase in state funding between 1991 and 1993. This resulted from a rewriting of the school funding formula which took place during the same session that H.B. 3565 was passed. Although this new formula brought some measure of relief to certain

underfunded districts, it hit many high-spending "flagship" districts particularly hard.

The Legislature was not able to agree on a source of replacement revenue, and instead referred a sales tax proposal to the voters, the proceeds of which would be devoted to education. It was defeated in November, 1993 by a 3-to-1 margin. Schools now face cuts as large as 20 percent in their operating budgets on top of static budgets the past two years which, when the effects of inflation are considered, amount to an additional cut of seven percent.

The net effect of these changes in funding has been to cause significant reductions in the educational programs in nearly every district in the state. Numerous cuts, including personnel reductions-in-force, were made. This combination of events left many educators shaken, wondering if the citizens of Oregon supported public education, or whether educators were simply made scapegoats because people did not want to pay more taxes. Morale was at a low point in many schools as teachers and administrators eliminated cherished programs and services, or, even more painfully, watched friends and colleagues lose their jobs.

These changes in the financing system compounded one another. In a normal year, either changing the funding formula or restricting budget increases would be enough to cause educators concern. The two in combination heightened the uncertainty surrounding the future of most districts. Educators were heard to remark that they simply couldn't believe that so many things were changing at once. The adaptability of school districts as organizational structures and of educators as managers of change was being pushed to its limits.

Issues of Ownership: Who Owns H.B. 3565?

As noted previously, the Legislature's ambitious attempt to restructure education was launched without significant participation by any major educational constituency. Of all the groups that historically have had an interest in educational policy, the business community has been the most singular and unstinting in its support of education reform in Oregon.[1] Other groups have been wary for a series of reasons.

The school boards association has expressed concerned about the addition of site councils at all school buildings, one of the few elements of the Act that mandated a particular program or practice statewide. The teachers' union has opposed the two certificates, and in general has expressed skepticism regarding H.B. 3565, while simultaneously endorsing the need for reform generally. The administrators' organization has been supportive, but most of its efforts are devoted to stabilizing and increasing funding. Higher education had, until recently, not been actively engaged in the process of meaning-making and had tended to see few implications for it in the legislation.

A few superintendents had enthusiastically embraced the goals of the legislation, but only a few. Similarly, a number of principals had decided that the Act provided a vehicle for "unsticking" their faculties, or for continuing efforts already underway, and seized upon it. These individuals began to create their own definitions and solutions, unwilling to wait for the educational agencies and policy making bodies to provide guidance (or restriction).

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[1] It is worth noting that even the business community split over whether to support the 1993 proposal for a sales tax dedicated to education.

Therefore, H.B. 3565 finds itself, after almost three years, with an unclear set of specifications for educational practice, only tentative support from many key constituent groups, and the pressures of major fiscal retrenchment facing state government generally and public schools specifically.

Factors Supporting Education Reform

There are also a number of forces operating to support educational reform. Results from our earlier survey (Conley, Goldman, & Dunlap, 1993b) indicated that at least a third of the state's teachers and a somewhat higher proportion of principals were anticipating implementation of the Act. Furthermore, somewhat more than half of respondents thought it was time for fundamental change in education. When asked about the specific proposals contained in the law, such as alternative learning centers and the two mastery certificates, over two-thirds of the respondents indicated they felt these elements were likely to lead to increased student learning.

Many of these individuals began to design new programs and strategies in response to the Act. While much of what they did could easily be linked to larger trends in school restructuring nationally, the law helped create and support an atmosphere of ferment in many schools. Schools had engaged extensively in orientation and awareness activities, so that 75 percent of the educators responding to the 1992 survey indicated that their knowledge of the Act was either high or moderate, and by 1993 the number had risen to 88 percent.

The Department of Education funded a number of design and demonstration sites in 1992. These sites began to design models by mid-1993, and educators visited these sites in increasing numbers. Conferences on topics related to H.B. 3565 (e.g., outcomes-based education, portfolio

assessment, multiage grouping, the two certificates) were heavily subscribed. Within the state, reform-minded educators began organizing networks, conferences and reciprocal school visits. A number of districts created positions specifically charged with implementing the legislation.

There were political forces favoring reform, as well. As noted, the business community, particularly the large corporations that were members of the state Business Roundtable organization, the Oregon Business Council, favored the Act. Chief executives and personnel managers from these companies made public statements supporting educational improvement, participated in Department of Education task forces, and even convened an "Education Summit" modeled after the Forest Summit President Clinton held in Portland. These businesspeople were able to leverage their impact by linking their support for tax increases or general tax reform to continued implementation of H.B. 3565.

The law was not without its political supporters, as well. The bill's sponsor, an influential state legislator, moved on to become mayor of Portland. The State Superintendent of Public Instruction elected in November, 1991, was a career politician who had previously been Secretary of State and an unsuccessful gubernatorial candidate in 1987. Although some believed she would use the state superintendent post as a stepping stone to higher office, she quickly let it be known that she would support educational reform and H.B. 3565 wholeheartedly. Her public and private advocacy helped ensure that the law was not seriously attacked or amended during the 1993 legislative session.

The policy environment just described is complex and turbulent. The interaction between a state, which sets performance expectations, and school sites, which must design programs to ensure that all students meet

the standards, contains its own set of tensions and contradictions. An understanding of these factors helps presage the presentation of data on teacher responses to H.B. 3565. The following section briefly reviews some of the salient literature related to state systemic school reform.

Review of the Literature[2]

There are at least two perspectives on the relationship between state level policy and educational restructuring, and a third that attempts to integrate the first two. One considers the state as a stimulus for educational reform; the other focuses on the critical role of individual schools sites in any program of educational change. The two pose the classic top-down/bottom-up paradox of reform in complex change-resistant systems. We first consider the role of the state as the initiator of educational reform.

In reaction to the issues raised by *Nation at Risk*, a great deal of state-level education reform legislation was enacted during the past decade. Key questions have been raised regarding the efficacy of such legislation. Studies of these reforms conclude that they have tended to mandate more of the same at the school site level, meaning more required courses in academic core areas (Center for Policy Research, 1989; Fuhrman, 1988; Grossman, Kirst, & Schmidt-Posner, 1986). This type of reform requires little change in fundamental practices or organizational structures.

While many educational policy scholars have posited the relative merits and potentialities of state intervention as the engine for fundamental school reform (Elmore, 1983; Elmore & McLaughlin, 1988; Firestone, Fuhrman, & Kirst, 1991; Fuhrman, Clune, & Elmore, 1991; Fuhrman & Elmore, 1990; Grossman, Kirst, & Schmidt-Posner, 1986; Smith & O'Day, 1991; Steffy, 1993; Wirt & Kirst, 1989), there are relatively fewer studies

[2] Elements of this section are adapted from Goldman & Conley, 1993.

that systematically examine the process by which educators make meaning of reform and mediate state-level initiatives. Although many scholars and reformers believe that real restructuring can only be initiated at the state level, few have been able to examine whether such action actually lead to significant change in individual schools.

Fuhrman and others have argued that there is evidence that state-level initiatives can lead to change in local districts (Fuhrman, 1993; Fuhrman, Clune, & Elmore, 1991). The question of translation to individual school sites remains unanswered. Much of what Fuhrman and others were examining were the adaptive incremental reforms of the eighties. The ways in which larger-scale, more fundamental programs of educational restructuring play out at the school site remains largely unexamined, primarily because few states have yet attempted such programs. Mazzoni (1991) states that "...scholars have had little opportunity until recently to analyze the legislative initiation of structural reforms, because relatively few laws of this sort were enacted (Plank, 1988)." There is evidence that a number of states are considering more fundamental structural reform.

A second body of research addresses how individual school sites are self-starting engines of school restructuring (Conley, 1991; Eberts, Schwartz, & Stone, 1990; Elmore, 1988; Glen & Crandall, 1988; Goldman, Dunlap, & Conley, 1991; Hallinger, Murphy, & Hausman, 1991; Radnofsky & others, 1990; Taylor & Teddlie, 1992). These researchers tends to view state intervention as a problem, nuisance or barrier to change rather than as an initiator or facilitator of it. Their studies focus on how educators at individual school sites are working to reconceptualize schooling in unique, non-standardized ways (Goldman, Dunlap, & Conley, 1993), and how

educators at individual school sites are making meaning out of the restructuring movement (Conley, Dunlap, & Goldman, 1992).

A third line of analysis attempts to integrate these seemingly disparate perspectives on change at the school level. The integrating theme is the concept of policy coherence (Fuhrman, 1993; Smith & O'Day, 1991), the notion that the policy environment should send a consistent, coherent message from level to level. This complex, evolving construct captures the notion that local, state, and national policy regarding education is rarely coherent. Therefore, educators have difficulty determining to which policy framework or initiative they should respond when considering whether or how to change any aspect of educational programs. In practice, this means that states, in particular, need to make clear what it is they expect from their educational systems and then need to make sure that all policy levers are employed to support these expectations.

One dimension of coherence is the degree to which state-level instructional policies such as curriculum frameworks, student assessment, instructional materials, and teacher professional development are aligned with clear improvement goals. Another level involves not only orchestrating these preceding dimensions, but addressing governance issues, as well:

> That is, although states set ambitious expectations for students and coordinate instructional policies around those expectations, they would also undertake reforms to provide a great deal of freedom to schools in reaching those outcomes. Minimal standards regulations that currently make up much of education policy would be removed or revised so as not to restrict flexibility. State instructional policies would be sufficiently explicit so as not to be vague, but not so detailed

that they would dictate day-to-day curriculum or constrain pedagogical choices (Fuhrman, 1993, p. xiii).

This blend of an accountability framework at the state level accompanied by enhanced freedom at the school site to develop programs that achieve accountability goals frames current strategies for a revamped educational system. This combination raises a new set of issues to be considered, however.

At the heart of this new accountability system are two important, untested assumptions: first, that we can specify desired student learning with enough clarity so that we can assess it reliably; and second, that educators will respond when given the opportunity (or rather the requirement) to reshape their programs to ensure that student learning occurs.

The ability to develop such a system may be a critical next step in creating a coherent policy environment. Historical evidence suggests that schools are relatively responsive to externally-developed performance standards, particularly those with some consequence attached to them (Powell, 1993). These outcomes and assessments serve to operationalize state expectations for schools and define how they will be held accountable for student performance.

Assuming such clarity of both purpose and accountability (neither of which have been present in most American schools), can educators at the site level restructure their schools to meet these performance goals? Research on sites that have had some success in adapting their instructional programs indicates that change of this nature, while possible, is difficult (Conley, 1991; Conley & Goldman, in press). There is no "recipe" for adaptation of this magnitude. However, some principles of successful school

site restructuring have been identified by researchers who have examined events in restructuring schools (Berends, 1992; Conley, 1993b; Cushman, 1991; Louis & Miles, 1990; Muncey & McQuillan, 1993; Murphy & Hallinger, 1993). These schools have at least some of the following characteristics. They:

- utilize data to make decisions.
- demonstrate a history of school improvement, or the use of systematic planning and improvement models.
- create organizational alignment.
- enhance collaboration, decrease isolation.
- develop measures of success and improvement.
- employ leadership techniques that facilitate problem-solving and organizational adaptability.
- differentiate or develop governance structures that distinguish or balance between workplace democracy and improved work group functioning.
- enhance teachers' sense of efficacy.
- "reculture" around values and rituals that support new practices and continued adaptation.

In practice the interplay among these context variables makes it difficult to generalize about methods for successful school restructuring. Attention to the complexity of school site context appears to be an important, yet somewhat overlooked variable in this equation. Differences in even one context variable can profoundly affect the strategy that must be pursued if change is to result. Furthermore, it appears likely that some schools are so dysfunctional or resistant to change that no strategy short of disbanding the faculty and starting over will work, an option that is beginning to be examined seriously in some quarters (Schmidt, 1994). How can a new system of policy coherence be established if the formula for success is so complex and situation-specific?

While much of the effective schools research has surveyed context, at least implicitly, research results were generalizations that were often interpreted or applied independent of context. The results were

disappointing in many cases (see: Clark, Lotto, & Astuto, 1984; Cohen, 1982; Purkey & Smith, 1983; Rowan, Bossert, & Dwyer, 1983). Corbett, Dawson, and Firestone (1984) noted the importance of attention to context in their study of change projects at 14 schools. Their focus of their study gradually shifted from success in implementing innovations at the schools to "understanding how local contexts affected the relationship between change strategies and project outcomes" (p. 1). Their findings were that "each school has its own set of challenges that must be met in ways that are uniquely appropriate for that school" (p. 146).

Recent studies have affirmed the importance of context. Teddlie and Stringfield (1993) restate this point and suggest the increasing importance of context in the understanding of school effectiveness:

> School effects research in the 1990s will hopefully define context in more dynamic ways than just the impact of SES, urbanicity, and grade level. Nevertheless, by studying these basic contextual factors, the LSES [Longitudinal Study of Effective Schools], in conjunction with other investigations of the late 1980s and early 1990s, has firmly established context as one of the major areas in the school effects research field (p. 219).

The Oregon reform legislation captures all of the issues considered in the preceding discussion. It is an attempt to do precisely what has been described previously in this section by setting clear outcomes and assessments at the state level, then charging schools to redesign themselves to achieve the desired performance levels. Issues of school context are overlooked in the legislation, but are likely to be important to its acceptance or rejection by educators. Our investigation examines how teachers are

reacting to this challenge individually and collectively within schools. The next section presents the methodology for the study.

Data Collection and Methodology

Data reported in this paper come from three sources: (1) a self-administered questionnaire distributed to all certified staff in 92 schools during Fall 1992, approximately fifteen months after the passage of H.B. 3565 and a second virtually identical questionnaire distributed to 25 schools in Fall, 1993; (2) content of a comments section on those questionnaires; and (3) focus group discussions in 18 of those 25 schools conducted in Winter 1994. We first describe the development and administration of the questionnaire, the strategy for analyzing the resulting data, and indicate how this process informed the follow-up study. We then briefly describe the analysis of comments and the focus group process.

Instrument Development, Administration, and Data Analysis

The five-page questionnaire consisted of 99 forced-choice items, one open-ended question, a comments section, three items on personal characteristics, and five items describing the respondent's school building and school district. The questionnaire included items on the following areas: knowledge of H.B. 3565 and beliefs about its *intent*; assessment of the law's potential *effects* and predictions about the success of implementation; personal reactions, including how much each respondent might have to *change*; the resources that would be required; and whether specific provisions will improve student learning.

The sampling strategy for the 1992 survey was attempted to correct for the extreme skewness in the size distribution of Oregon's 297 school districts, many of which are extremely small. Based on the number of

students served, the state was divided into four groups of roughly equal size, plus Portland, the one large urban district. Within categories, districts were randomly selected so that each would proportionally represent its share of the state's student population (see Goldman & Conley, 1993 for a more detailed description of this strategy). Within the selected district, we randomly selected buildings, including one high school, two middle schools, and three elementaries. If a district had fewer than six schools, all were surveyed. Sixty-four schools from 18 districts were selected by this method. We also surveyed all 28 schools in two districts in which we planned more intensive case studies, resulting in a total of 92 schools. Of these 20 were high schools, 24 junior high or middle schools, 48 were elementaries, and the final two were alternative schools. Only one school refused our request to survey them, it was replaced by another in the same district. Questionnaires were distributed at faculty meetings, and staff returned the completed document to drop boxes in the school offices. Of the 3,445 questionnaires distributed, a total of 2,260 were returned, a rate of just over 66 percent. Over 1,200 respondents either answered the open-ended question and/or added comments.

Analysis of the 1992 data allowed us to distill four additive scales from the 99 questionnaire items. The scales were developed by analyzing the language of individual items and through statistical analysis, specifically item correlations, factor analysis, and the SPSS scale sub-routine. Scale 1, Resistant to Change, reflects both skepticism about and disengagement from H.B. 3565. Scale 2 is Supportive of Change, consisting of items that indicate support for H.B. 3565 and that suggest a general sense that schools should be changing. Scale 3 measures anticipated Changes in Practices, specifically in such areas as developmentally appropriate practices,

integrating curriculum, and increased teacher collegiality and cooperation. Scale 4, Learning Outcomes, is taken directly from questions asking the respondents whether, in their opinion, specific features of H.B. 3565 would lead to increased student learning. The scale alpha coefficients range from .680 to .822. The reader should note that scale values are indexed so that an individual's scale score is a figure, ranging from 0 to 100, that represents the percentage of "agree" responses to the items comprising each scale.

1.	**Resistant to Change**
1.	Unrealistic
2.	Not good ideas for education
3.	Unfair to some types of student (e.g., not everyone will be able to pass CIM)
4.	Too much change too fast for schools
5.	Am skeptical
6.	Will take it seriously when it is adequately funded
7.	Have too much else to do to give it much thought at the moment
8.	Rewrite it to make timelines more reasonable
2.	**Supportive of Change**
1.	It is time for fundamental change in education
2.	Many schools are already doing much of what H.B. 3565 mandates
3.	Ideas make sense
4.	Current system isn't working for many kids
5.	See it as an opportunity to do things I've always wanted to do
3.	**Changes in Practices**
1.	3565 will promote more developmentally appropriate practice in elementary schools
2.	3565 will increase teacher control over instructional program at school
3.	3565 will cause teachers to increase number of instructional strategies they employ
4.	3565 will lead to greater integration of social services in schools
5.	3565 will lead to greater curriculum integration
6.	3565 will lead to new and diverse ways to organize or group students for learning
7.	3565 will lead to increased teacher involvement in decision-making
8.	3565 will lead to increased teacher collegiality and cooperation
4.	**Learning Outcomes**
1.	3565 will benefit all students
2.	3565 will benefit college-bound
3.	3565 will cause more children to enter kindergarten better prepared to learn
4.	Certificate of Initial Mastery will lead to decrease in dropouts

5.	Alternative learning centers will help decrease dropouts
6.	Site councils will lead to learning
7.	Increased accountability for school sites and districts will lead to learning
8.	Full funding for preschool programs to enable all students to enter school ready to learn
9.	Extended school year will lead to learning
10.	Certificate of Initial Mastery will lead to learning
11.	Certificate of Advanced Mastery will lead to learning
12.	Alternative learning centers will lead to learning
13.	Parental choice for students who are not succeeding in a school will lead to learning
14.	Coordination of social services at the school site for those who need such services will lead to learning
15.	Mixed age classrooms in grades 1-3 will lead to learning
16.	Educational philosophy of developmentally appropriate practices in grades 1-3 will lead to learning

Data analysis identified substantial variation between schools on all four scales, suggesting that there are differences in readiness for school reform and attitudes towards H.B. 3565 from school to school. We used this variation as the basis for selecting the 1993 sample. Each school in the 1992 sample was rank ordered on the four scales. The rank ordering provided a rough index of schools in what we interpreted as a descending level of support for H.B. 3565, from school 1 to school 92.

Using a table of random numbers, seven schools each were selected from the top and bottom quartiles, and ten were chosen from the middle quartiles. Twenty-four schools were selected; 10 elementaries, 5 middle schools, 2 junior highs, and seven high schools. An item-by-item analysis of the 1992 data revealed that staff in the schools selected for the 1993 survey gave responses that were virtually identical to those of the total sample. Two minor complications did emerge. One of the elementaries changed from a K-5 to a K-3 school. We surveyed the remaining staff in the K-3 school. One junior high split into two middle schools. For that situation, we aggregated responses from the two schools, treating them as one.

The 1993 sub-sample appears to be an accurate representation of the larger sample from which is drawn, although it contained no very small schools. Table 4 shows scale means for the entire 1992 sample and for those schools selected for the follow-up survey. The 1993 survey responses mirror the responses from the 1992 sample as-a-whole, except for the resistance to change scale.

We contacted principals in mid-September, asking whether they would be willing to let us briefly address a staff meeting or, alternatively, arrange to distribute the questionnaires and have teachers leave them anonymously in a drop box. Members of the research team delivered and picked-up the questionnaires personally, except for two schools located over 300 miles from the University. We asked staff to complete the questionnaires by early November so that responses would not be contaminated by results of a school funding referendum on the November ballot. No principals refused our request for access to the school. The cumulative response rate was 64.7 percent, a bit lower that the 1992 rate of 66 percent, largely because of a very low number of responses from two schools.

Table 1. 1992 Sample Description and Response Rates

District Size (ADM)	# Districts in Oregon	# Districts in Sample	ADM in Oregon	% of Oregon ADM	Surveys Distributed	Surveys Returned	% of Surveys	Return Rate
30,000 +	1	1	53,700	11.6%	225	140	9.2%	62.2%
10,400 -29,999	4	2	83,100	17.9	562	374	24.7	66.5%
5,000 -10,399	15	4	113,300	24.4	504	271	18.0	53.8
2,000 - 4,999	35	4	113,700	24.5	757	478	31.7	63.1
under 2,000	242	9	100,200	21.6	390	247	16.4	63.3
State of Oregon	297	20	464,000	100.0%	2438	1510	100.0%	61.9%
2 Case Study Districts (5,000-10,000 ADM)					1007	747		74.2

For presentation purposes we have aggregated the questionnaire items into a continuous scale format which provides the reader with a percent agree figure that reflects a schoolwide mean on each scale. For the actual data analysis, however, we have chosen a strategy which treats the data as nominal and makes fewer assumptions about distributions. Hence, our assessments of differences between schools on the 1992 and 1993 survey responses are based on chi-square distributions of agree/disagree responses.

Focus Group Process and Rank-Ordering of Context Factors

The focus group instrument was developed after an analysis of the 1992 data which suggested that questionnaire data were not providing enough information on the reasons why there might be differences among schools. We hypothesized that context variables might be important to examine if we were to understand better the variation among schools. We chose to ask teachers their perceptions regarding a series of contextual factors. We drew up sixteen open-ended questions designed to generate conversation about how and why the school was responding to school reform. We were able to arrange focus group meetings in 18 of the 25 schools (two schools were over 300 miles away, one refused our request, and the others were scheduled but were canceled or deferred at the principals' request). The schools responses to all of the items on both 1992 and 1993 surveys were shared with the staff, and we asked them to provide interpretations of what those results might mean.

Two groups were conducted at three of the schools: at all others one group was held. Average participation was six teachers per group. Participants were self-selected, although principals were asked to encourage teachers who represented a cross-section of opinions on reform to participate. Groups were held before or after school and lasted

approximately 45 minutes each. The focus group leaders were graduate research assistants who had been collecting the questionnaire data, and had already made contact at the schools where they conducted their focus groups.

We also asked them to rank-order sixteen context factors to tell us what impact these had on attitudes toward reform in their school. These factors were derived from a review of the literature to discover the types of context factors that have been identified as important variables in the restructuring process (Fullan & Miles, 1992; Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991; Louis, 1992; Louis & Miles, 1990; Muncey & McQuillan, 1993; Newmann, 1991; Prestine & Bowen, 1993; Rosenholtz, 1991), and from one of the author's work in this area (Conley, 1991; Conley, 1992a; Conley, 1992b; Conley, 1993a; Conley, 1993b; Conley & Goldman, in press). The focus group questions and the rank order sheet are in Appendix A.

Analysis of Comments Section of Questionnaire

The questionnaire contained two places where respondent comments were solicited. The most extensive responses were found in the last item, and open-ended invitation to offer comments. 53 percent of the 1992 responses contained comments; 63 percent of the 1993 instruments did. To date, our analysis of the comments has been very general. We have created a number of categories to capture supportiveness and opposition to change. We have also attempted to gauge the intensity of emotion present in the responses by looking for words and phrases that add emphasis to the respondent's remarks. This preliminary form of analysis of these data serves in the context of this paper primarily to provide some textural data that help understand the survey and focus group data better.

Results

Summary of 1992 Survey Data

Our examination of responses to individual questionnaire items revealed that, in general, educators had positive attitudes toward the concepts embedded in H.B. 3565, and saw many of these as being philosophically consistent with beliefs about what constitutes effective educational practice. Over 90 percent thought the law was intended to restructure education and to increase student success. Fifty-nine percent believed the law would be implemented because the current system wasn't working for many kids and 53 percent agreed that it was time for fundamental change in education. While only 6 percent believed H.B. 3565 would be implemented more or less "as is," over eighty percent thought that Certificates of Initial and Advanced Mastery, the most far-reaching and controversial aspects of the bill, had a medium or high chance of being fully implemented. And over 70 percent agreed that implementation the law would lead to such changes as greater curriculum integration and new ways to group students. Moreover, over 65 percent of the respondents believed that these changes would improve student learning. In sum, Oregon educators seem accepting of most of the law's premises, and their responses are more positive than those reported in Harris and Wagner's (1993) national sample of teacher responses to the reform agenda.

Educators appreciated that the law would have implications for their own practice. Twenty-nine percent believed they would have to change "a lot" of what they were doing now and 66 percent thought they would have to change "some." Forty-three percent thought that the changes might be "too much, too fast" and 41 percent thought that the changes were "just a fad." Virtually everyone was worried about how the mandated changes would be

funded: over 90 percent felt time and funds for staff development were an absolute requirement. Over two-thirds believed teachers and parents needed more information and about half thought business community and social service agency buy-in would be important.

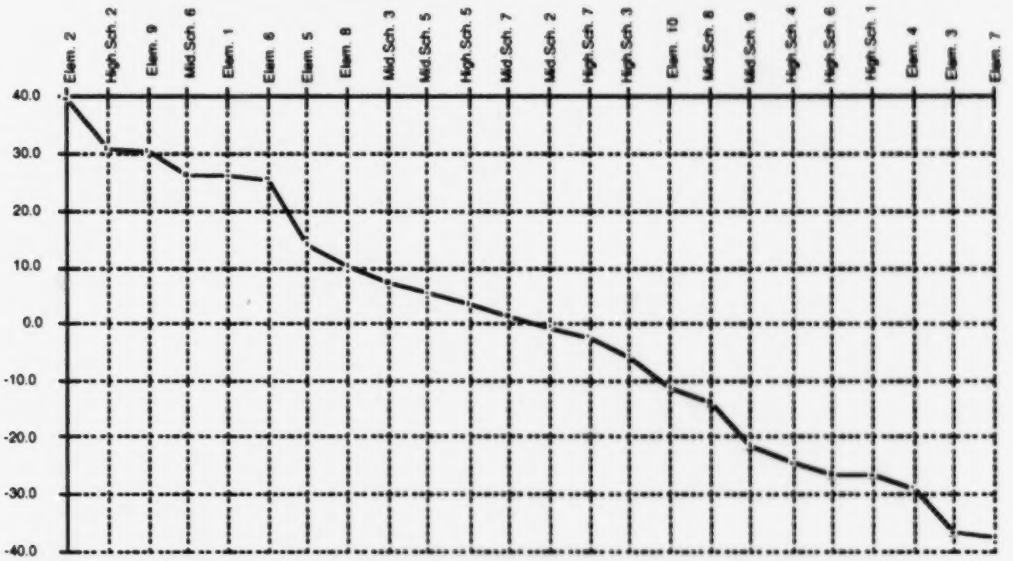
Construction of the four scales described in the section above allowed us to employ multi-variate analyses on the 1992 data. Surprisingly, neither individual nor school demography was strongly associated with resistance to change, a positive attitude towards change, a belief that practices would change or a belief that the reform legislation would lead to positive learning outcomes. Respondent gender, age, and experience made no difference. More high school teachers believed that the present system was not working for many kids, but there were no other major differences between elementary, intermediate, and secondary level educators. More administrators than teachers supported change. Administrators were also more optimistic that restructuring will occur.

There were no systematic differences between educators in large or small, rich or poor school buildings or districts. Educators from distant Eastern Oregon were the least positive about school reform, but the magnitude of the differences was not large. Educators in schools that had received state school improvement grants were more supportive of H.B.3565 than others, and this finding informed the way we structured the 1993 survey.

When we used school rather than individuals as units of analysis, that is, when we aggregated individual school's scale scores into a school average, we discovered substantial variation between schools. The variation surfaced both within and between school districts. However, school scale scores did not correlate with such school demographics as school or district size,

whether the district was rich or poor or the children were rich or poor (in Oregon those variables are not necessarily correlated), or even whether the principal was a male or female. These general findings, summarized in Table 2, indicate the range of differences between schools. These differences are sufficiently large that we suspect that some contextual factors might be at work. These factors, attributable neither to individual nor collective demography, and not easily (if at all) distillable from the questionnaire data might result from aspects of school culture or history and from the interaction between the school leader(s), the staff, and the students and parents.

Table 2: Changes in School Scores, 1992-1993



Comparison of 1992 Sample, 1992 Subsample, 1993 Subsample Means

A comparison of means from the 1992 sample with the 1992 and 1993 subsamples reveals little shift in means on most items. Table 3presents these means along with the significance levels for t-tests applied to compare the subsamples. A comparison of the four scale means reveals a

similar pattern. Table 4 contains the scale means and standard deviations from year to year between the subsamples and the larger sample.

Table 3: Sample and Subsample Means on Questionnaire Items: 1992-1993

	1992 Survey Sample (n=2,257)	1992 Sub-sample (n=699)	1993 Sub-sample (n=669)	Signifi-cance
1. How would you characterize your knowledge of H.B. 3565?	10	***8***	***19***	.01
2. What do you believe is the intent of H.B. 3565? Indicate whether you agree or disagree with each statement:				
Intent is to increase student success	91	91	92	.01
Intent is to restructure public education	96	97	96	.01
Intent is to get educators to talk seriously about change	80	78	83	.01
Intent is job training	56	53	54	.01
Intent is to move to learner outcomes as the way to judge schools	72	70	70	.01
Intent is to empower local school districts to make choices within a state framework of general expectations	66	65	64	.01
Intent is to increase accountability for public schools	80	79	77	.01
Intent is to enhance teacher involvement in decision-making	63	***60***	***72***	.01
3. What do you think the effect of H.B. 3565 will be? Indicate whether you agree or disagree with each statement:				
Will promote more developmentally appropriate practice in elementary schools	66	66	68	.01
Will increase parental involvement	45	43	49	.01
Will increase business community involvement	70	70	69	.01
Will increase teacher control over instructional program at school	39	38	46	.01
Will benefit all students	41	41	38	.01
Will benefit college-bound	63	62	58	.01
Will cause more children to enter kindergarten better prepared to learn	45	42	38	.01
Will cause teachers to increase number of instructional strategies they employ	62	***60***	***71***	.01
Will lead to greater integration of social services in schools	61	62	62	
Will lead to greater curriculum integration	74	73	77	.01
Will lead to new and diverse ways to organize or group students for learning	77	77	77	
Will lead to increased teacher involvement in decision-making	55	***55***	***62***	.01
Will lead to increased teacher collegiality and cooperation	51	51	56	.01

Will lead to greater parent/student choice of the school that the student attends	59	57	53	.01
Certificate of Initial Mastery will lead to decrease in dropouts	45	43	45	.01
Certificate of Advanced Mastery will lead to greater tracking	73	73	71	.01
Alternative learning centers will help decrease dropouts	69	***71***	***65***	.01
4. How likely do you think it is that H.B. 3565 will be implemented more or less as-is?	6	7	8	.01
5. How likely do you think it is that the following sections will be implemented:				
Certificate of Initial Mastery	40	***38***	***45***	.01
Certificate of Advanced Mastery	34	***32***	***38***	.01
Accountability measures (More reporting to public on achievement of school goals, student achievement)	31	33	27	.01
Extended school year	22	22	19	.01
Alternative learning centers	24	25	23	.01
Integration of social services and schools	20	18	18	
Site-based decision-making	37	***36***	***46***	.01
Pre-school programs for all children	22	20	17	.01
Programs of choice	15	15	14	.01
6. If you believe H.B. 3565 will be implemented, why do you think it will be implemented (choose all that apply):				
It is time for fundamental change in education	56	***61***	***55***	.01
Business community is demanding change in education	49	48	46	.01
Parents are demanding change in education	33	33	33	
Many schools are already doing much of what H.B. 3565 mandates	30	***29***	***35***	.01
Ideas make sense	33	32	33	
Current system isn't working for many kids	59	***61***	***55***	.01
Most parts don't require much additional funding	10	10	10	
Educators are dedicated to doing what's best for kids	53	49	51	.01
7. If you believe H.B. 3565 will not be implemented, why do you think it won't be implemented? (choose all that apply):				
Lack of adequate funding	83	83	81	.01
Educational interest groups (for example: COSA, OEA, OSBA, others)	21	20	22	.01
Unrealistic	34	33	34	.01
Not good ideas for education	10	11	13	.01
Unfair to some types of student (for example, not everyone will be able to pass CIM)	34	33	34	.01
Slanted too much toward needs of business community	21	23	19	.01
Too much change too fast for schools	43	40	42	.01
Parents of college-bound will object to provisions of the Act	20	21	24	.01

Colleges and universities in state will object	16	16	21	.01
Difficulty for students transferring into or out of state	36	35	35	
Rural areas can't do much of it	29	29	31	.01
Too much of a fad, no grassroot support among educators	41	40	41	.05
8. What is your personal reaction to H.B. 3565? (choose all that apply):				
Am basically unaware of it	13	13	11	
Am anticipating its implementation	33	33	37	.01
Am skeptical	52	52	52	.01
Am waiting and seeing	53	***53***	***45***	.01
Am depressed by colleagues' reactions	15	15	14	
Am disinterested	5	6	9	.01
See it as an opportunity to do things I've always wanted to do	27	27	28	.01
Will retire before major provisions take place	14	15	15	
Am planning to leave education (not retire) before major provisions take place	4	3	4	.01
Will take it seriously when it is adequately funded	65	64	62	.01
Don't see that it has any implications for me	2	2	2	
Have too much else to do to give it much thought at the moment	25	25	20	.01
9. If 3565 is implemented, how much do you believe you would have to change what you do and the way you do it?	29	28	27	.01
11. For H.B. 3565 to be implemented successfully how important are the following ("Most Important" responses only):				
Fully fund all provisions requiring extra money	89	88	88	
Provide time for staff development for all schools	92	91	90	.05
Make class sizes smaller	73	70	71	
Identify models or demonstration sites to visit	46	44	46	.01
Create accountability for doing it	47	48	48	
Have Legislature recommit to Act next session	46	44	44	.05
Have business community show buy-in and ownership	53	48	51	.01
Have social service agencies show buy-in and ownership	48	43	41	.01
Make more 2020-type grants available	48	43	46	.01
Rewrite it to make timelines more reasonable	42	40	36	.01
Make early retirement options available for those who want to leave teaching	35	34	38	.01
Restructure teacher (and administrator) preparation programs	57	54	56	.01
Make available to teachers more information on what the Act requires	65	***65***	***54***	.01
Make available to parents more information on changes the Act will require schools to make	66	63	57	.01

12. Do you agree or disagree that the following elements of H.B. 3565 will lead to improved student learning if implemented:				
Site councils	69	69	67	.01
Increased accountability for school sites and districts	67	67	64	.01
Full funding for preschool programs to enable all students to enter school ready to learn	84	***86***	***79***	.01
Extended school year	35	37	34	.01
Certificate of Initial Mastery	66	65	63	.01
Certificate of Advanced Mastery	65	65	63	.01
Alternative learning centers	86	***85***	***78***	.01
Parental choice for students who are not succeeding in a school	62	64	59	.01
Coordination of social services at the school site for those who need such services	81	***80***	***72***	.01
Mixed age classrooms in grades 1-3	59	60	57	.01
Educational philosophy in grades 1-3 that emphasizes individual development over all students achieving the same things at the same rate (developmentally appropriate practices)	80	79	74	.01

While subsample item means remained relatively unchanged between 1992 and 1993, a few did show a substantial shift from one year to the next. We use t-tests later to identify statistically significant changes. Here we simply identify some of the changes in absolute values that might merit comment.

Teacher belief the law would generally shift more decision making to schools and teachers was reflected in increased agreement on two questions. The proportion of respondents who agreed that the law was intended to increase teacher involvement in decision making rose from 60 to 72 percent, and the number who believed that site-based decision making would be implemented went from 36 to 46 percent.

Teachers also seemed to believe to a greater degree that the law was intended to cause them to increase the number of instructional strategies they employ (increase from 60 to 71 percent). They indicated it was more likely that the Certificates of Initial and Advanced Mastery would be

implemented (Initial Mastery from 38 to 45 percent agree; Advanced Mastery from 33 to 38 percent agree). Fewer respondents indicated they were waiting to see what would happen next with H.B. 3565 (decrease from 53 to 45). The educators also thought schools were already doing much of what H.B. 3565 mandates (increase from 29 to 35 percent).

The number who said they were highly knowledgeable about the law doubled from 8 to 19 percent. This perception was supported by a decrease in the number of respondents who believed it was important to provide teachers more information for the law to be implemented successfully (65 to 54 percent).

At the same time, there were indications that teachers were less confident that specific elements of the law would result in improved student learning. The percent who believed that alternative learning centers will help decrease dropouts declined from 71 to 65 percent. This was reflected in the proportion who felt these learning centers would improve student learning if implemented (decline from 85 to 78 percent). Other areas where teachers felt less confident that learning would occur as a result included full funding for preschools (decrease from 86 to 79 percent), and coordination with social services (decrease from 80 to 72 percent). It is worth noting that even with these decreases there is still very strong belief that these innovations will increase student learning. The number who believed it was time for fundamental change in education decreased from 61 to 55 percent, as did the number who believed that the current system isn't working for many kids.

Changes Between 1992 and 1993 in Survey Scale Scores

One of the most striking results from the two years of survey data was the similarity of the sample and subsample scores on all scales for 1992 and

1993. This was true when comparing the 1993 scores from the subsample schools with their 1992 scores and with the 1992 sample scores on the four scales we constructed. This finding suggests very little change in the sample as a whole. However, as we will discuss momentarily, the mean scores masked large swings within schools.

Table 4: Comparison of Total Sample to Subsample

Scale:	1992 Sample:	Standard Deviation:	1992 Subsample:	Standard Deviation:	1993 Subsample:	Standard Deviation:
Resistant to Change	37.9	22.7	34.0	22.5	33.4	22.8
Supportive of Change	32.5	24.2	34.0	24.0	32.5	24.6
Practices	60.7	32.2	60.0	32.9	64.9	31.0
Outcomes	63.9	23.2	63.9	23.3	60.1	24.0

Also striking was the similarity of the scale scores of subpopulations. When analyzed by various individual demographic variables (age, gender, experience), grade level, geographic location, and district size, we found as few differences as we had in the 1992 survey data. This finding continues to call into question many of the generalizations and folk wisdom regarding teacher attitude toward change. Some of that wisdom holds that older teachers are naturally more resistant, as are high schools and, particularly, male mid-career high school teachers. While our focus groups did include many teachers with strong (negative) feelings about school change, the survey data did not support the archetype conception of supporters and resistors of school restructuring.

Does this similarity in mean scale scores imply that there is little difference in teacher attitudes toward school reform as it moves closer to implementation? Further analysis of the data on a school-by-school basis suggests otherwise. When changes in scale scores are compared on a school-

by-school basis it becomes more apparent that there are significant swings of opinion occurring in many buildings. The net effect, however, is that these changes cancel one another out when aggregated throughout the subsample. Some of this phenomenon may be an artifact of regression toward the mean: however, we suspect that regression does not adequately explain all of the variability among schools.

Focus Group Results

Results from the focus groups reinforce the impression that schools differ from one another. While there are important areas of agreement, the focus groups revealed very different attitudes from school to school toward reform and the teacher's responsibilities (and ability) to adapt their practices and the structure of their programs.

Some topics and sentiments were expressed relatively consistently in all the focus groups. Time and resources were generally viewed as essential, along with availability of professional development activities. Although, even within this constellation there were differences. Some schools had become very good at obtaining resources for professional development (through grant writing and community support) and focus group participants from these schools expressed the belief that resources, while important, could be obtained and should not be seen as a barrier to change. In general, though, teachers, not surprisingly, reaffirmed the importance of the opportunity for professional development (time, money, training) as important to the success of educational reform in their buildings.

Teachers were relatively unanimous in their view that the type of community in which their school existed had not influenced attitudes much. Similarly, a question that asked teachers to comment on the degree to which the school interacted with its surrounding community through

volunteers, partnerships, or collaborative ventures with other governmental agencies, yielded few comments affirming the importance of such a relationship. These teachers did not see education reform as something that was achieved by greater interaction with or responsiveness to their immediate external environment.

Analysis of Context Variables Rank Order Means

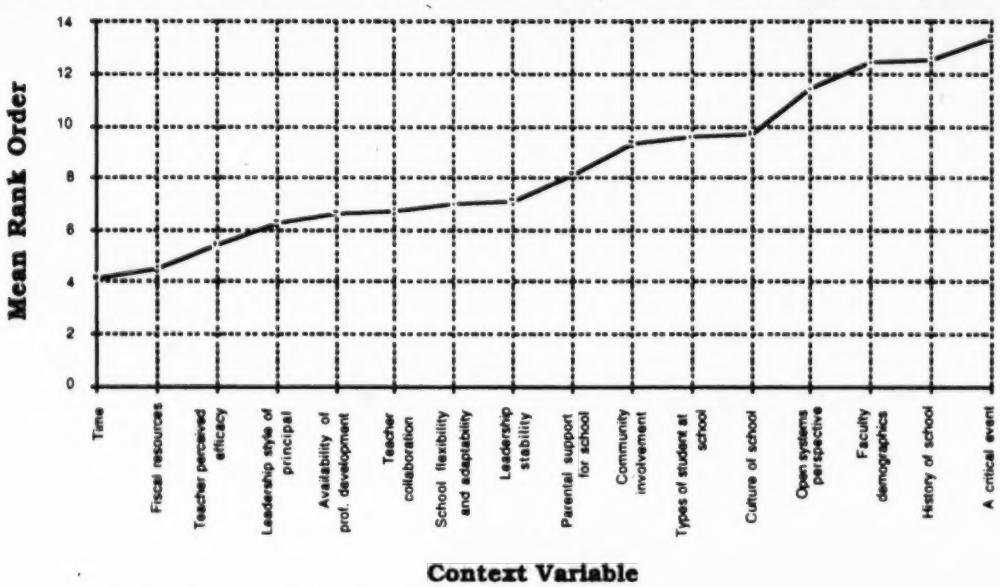
There were some striking differences from school to school. Teachers at schools that were active in reform or that had a history of innovation were more likely to express the belief that collaboration among teachers was absolutely critical. They were more emphatic in their belief that they could change the educational program to be more successful with students.

Schools that were struggling with education reform (or apparently not actively engaged in reform) tended to identify more external problems such as cuts in funding, not enough professional development activities, not enough time, poor leadership, students coming to school unprepared to learn, than did schools that were having some (self-perceived) success. Funding, in particular, was mentioned in the strongest terms as the factor that was hindering education reform in the building.

The analysis of the mean rank orders that appears in Table 5 shows respondents identifying a series of somewhat related factors as being most influential in affecting the implementation of reform in their buildings. These were: time to prepare for reform; fiscal resources to support reform; teacher perceived efficacy (ability of teachers to change the instructional environment in ways that allowed them to be more successful with students); leadership style of the principal; availability of professional development; and teacher collaboration. Factors further from the classroom

(a critical incident or event, the history of the school, faculty demographics, and community issues) were deemed less important in their influence.

Table 5: Focus Group Rank Order of School Means on Context Variables

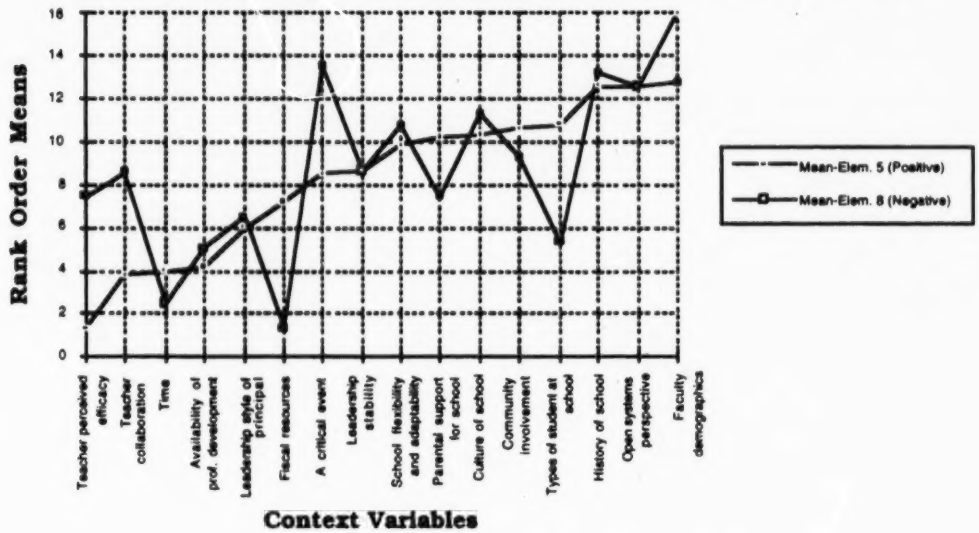


An examination of the mean ranking of two elementary schools, one with increased positive perceptions from 1992 to 1993, the other moving in a negative direction, suggests differences between the two school staffs' perceptions of which factors affect educational reform the most. Table 6 compares the rank orderings of the context variables by the two schools. The positive school emphasized a series of interrelated factors that allowed teachers to plan successfully how to redesign the school. Fiscal resources were about midway in importance; type of student at the school was fourth from the bottom in importance.

The negative school, by contrast, emphasized fiscal resources to a much greater degree. Time was also important, along with availability of professional development and leadership style of principal. However, type of student was considered much more important, while teacher collaboration and teacher perceived efficacy were much less important. These patterns

suggest very differing perceptions of the ability of teachers in these schools to work together to improve their schools, and differing perceptions of the degree to which they are constrained by factors over which they have little control (and over which they can never come to have much control).

Table 6: Comparison of Two Schools' Means on Rank Ordering



Analysis of Comments

Respondents had an option to complete a comments section on the last page of the instrument. Sixty-three percent chose to do so in 1993. The initial review of the comments suggests a pattern consistent with the scale scores from the survey: schools that demonstrated positive reactions returned more positive comments than school that were negative. Schools that had changed positive to negative or negative to positive tended to show a wider range of positive and negative comments. The negative schools contained proportionately more comments that were highly emotional and negative.

Some generalizations regarding the comments include the following:

From "positive" schools:

- A focus on outcomes; desire to become more involved with kids and to get parents involved.
- Reflective, aware that change is difficult and often painful; belief that they had embarked on changes before 3565.

From changing schools ("positive" to "negative" and "negative" to "positive"):

- Mixed feelings; acceptance of the idea that they will have to change; real concern about funding; more negative comments in 1993 than 1992.
- Focus on need for planning; belief that staff and parents aren't ready for this.
- Concern with special education; comments on teaming and integration in general.
- Concern about workload: how to handle change, more students, and more paper work (portfolios) all at once.
- Ready to go, but concern that program will be held back because of lack of funds.
- Reform oriented but skeptical of state's commitment; belief reforms weren't well thought out.

From "negative" schools:

- Continued resentment that noneducators wrote the law without the input of school people.
- Frustration and expressions of powerlessness, sense that no one is listening to them.
- Complaints that state is attempting to adopt a "European" style of education.

For the purposes of this paper we include only this initial analysis of the comments. We do intend to do more systematic coding of the comments and to link them with constellations of schools and with the focus group means. We also plan to revisit some of these schools for interviews with teachers.

Interpretation of Data

These data present a picture that is at once deceptively simple and tantalizingly complex. On the one hand, all indicators point in the direction of no major changes in the attitudes of Oregon educators as a whole toward school reform. Mean scores are remarkably similar from year to year, both

within the subsample (1992-1993) and between the 1993 subsample and the 1992 sample.

The overall conclusion that there has been little or no attitude change is, however, confounded by differences that apparently exist at the school building level. Recall that in the 1992 survey the most significant differences were between schools. The overall impression that restructuring is a school-by-school phenomenon is sustained by the 1993 data which continue to show substantial differences between schools and considerable movement by schools in their attitudes toward education reform.

One possible explanation is that school wide attitude sets are not robust, and that they may be affected from year-to-year by a number of possible factors: a change in leadership; success or failure in grant applications or, more broadly, in the school's attempts to make changes; internal conflicts; an accumulation of intractable problems; and possibly teacher burn-out. However, our data do not support this explanation. The focus group means suggest that schools view as most important to school reform those factors that relate most closely to teacher control of instruction and changes in instruction. Specific events, such as changes in leadership or loss of a grant, appear not to explain attitude changes in this subsample. Nor do more general environmental factors, such as the type of students in the school, or the community's perceptions of and expectations for the school.

At the same time, most survey items showed a statistically significantly shift in responses. These shifts are obscured in the four scale scores. Examining these items where changes did occur and clustering them with

similar or contrasting items helps provide additional insight into educator perceptions.

Teachers appear more aware of H.B. 3565 and its implications for their practice; few seem uninterested. The number who said the believed schools were already doing much of H.B. 3565 increased, indicating schools were moving to implement elements of the reform package ahead of the required timelines.

As teachers have become more aware, or as individual school buildings have undertaken restructuring programs (whether or not in response to the law), educator reactions have shifted in some cases. Teacher reactions to reform have not stabilized at the school level of analysis. These shifts suggest a lot is still happening within schools to affect attitudes toward reform. The results also suggest that no single factor can be identified as most important in explaining these shifts.

There appears to be considerable support for the ideas contained in the law, even in the face of massive budget cuts and layoffs. Teachers continued to indicate high levels of agreement that the specific elements of the law would lead to improved student learning. The proportion who believed the ideas made sense remained constant. In fact, there were few indications that support was waning.

At the same time, fewer teachers indicated they believed it was time for fundamental change in education, or that the current system wasn't working for many kids. As the magnitude of change required by H.B. 3565 came into focus teachers may have taken a more accurate measure of the amount of change to the current system that would have to take place to implement the law. Perhaps the current way of doing things came to look more appealing for some given this new perspective.

More teachers believed that the law would increase teacher decision making power at the school site and that site-based management would be implemented. In all likelihood, this reflects that fact that many districts are moving rapidly to implement site councils. The law required every district to have at least one school with a site council by September, 1994, and all schools to have a council by September, 1995. Many districts chose to start site councils at all schools simultaneously. This flurry of activity surrounding the startup of site councils may be one of the reasons teachers believed their role in site-based decision making is increasing.

The number of respondents who believed the Certificates of Initial and Advanced Mastery would be implemented increased substantially. Teachers see these reforms as more likely to occur, even as funding is cut and challenges to reform are mounted. These two elements are the linchpins of the reform effort. It is particularly interesting that rejection of these certificates did not increase, if teachers were feeling overwhelmed or concerned about funding issues.

Three questions present some additional insight into teacher state of mind relative to reform. On the one hand, the percentage indicating they would "wait and see" about H.B. 3565 dropped from 53 to 45; on the other hand, the proportion indicating they would take it seriously when adequately funded remained in the low-mid sixties. More teachers appear to be making up their mind about reform as they continue to reserve more fundamental commitment until funding issues are resolved. The percentage anticipating the law's implementation rose slightly, from 33 to 37 percent. These data suggest more teachers are gradually engaging with the reform agenda even as many remain skeptical.

Teachers are more aware of the law and its implications. The number indicating high knowledge level of the bill doubled from 8 to 19 percent, with an additional 69 percent indicating medium knowledge. The number who believed more information regarding the Act should be made available to teachers declined from 65 to 54 percent, another indicator that there is more understanding of the law. At the same time, the number who believed they would have to change much of what they do currently held essentially stable. Most teachers are not yet necessarily translating H.B. 3565 into terms that equate to extensive change in their own teaching methods.

The analysis of the focus group and comments data does not necessarily capture the intensity of feeling present among some teachers. In the focus groups it was clear that at least some of those who oppose H.B. 3565 do so with great fervor. They often lumped education reform with all the other things that were being "done to them;" reductions in funding, layoffs, an unresponsive legislature that was taking more control away from schools, unsupportive parents, and unmanageable students. This sense of frustration and powerlessness manifested itself in the comments section of the questionnaire in the form of extensive underlining and multiple exclamation points that respondents included to make sure the intensity of their point was not missed. This intensity was also reflected in their interactions with interviewers during the focus groups, where several respondents made the observation that the focus group was one of the first times (or the first time) anyone had asked their opinion on any of the issues related to education reform.

The rank ordering of context variables that affect education reform suggests that there may be a constellation of factors that interact to support implementation. This constellation confirms at one level conventional

wisdom on this subject: teachers believe they must have time, resources, and empowering leadership support if they are to be expected to change education significantly. At the same time, an examination of the school-by-school patterns suggested that there were clearly different patterns from school to school that could be related to the degree of support for or success with school-based reform. Different schools are identifying different formulae for implementing the law specifically, and change generally.

Discussion

The preceding analysis of the data helps frame some discussion of the intertwined issues and agendas that enfold the implementation of H.B. 3565. In this section we engage in a somewhat open-ended consideration of a number of factors operating to influence education reform implementation in the state and offer speculation on their likely effects and importance. We do this in part based on our broader knowledge of events in the state with the goal of providing the reader with a bit more context within which to understand the data we have presented.

The emphasis by teachers on the importance of funding for school reform might best be viewed through two lenses. First, those schools that are actively engaged in reform probably will need more resources to redesign their educational programs to the degree envisioned by H.B. 3565. These sites and their needs for resources should probably be considered separately from those who are reacting to the massive cuts imposed by the property tax limitation, Measure 5 which was explained in an earlier section.

The second lens examines those schools that have been hit hard by cuts and believe they cannot change without new fiscal resources. It is probably excessively naive to believe that a significant infusion of money into

many of these schools will likely result in wholesale change. When funding was increased for some school districts after H.B. 3565's implementation in 1991 there is little evidence that this increase led to greater willingness (or eagerness) to reform. Most new dollars tend to go where the old dollars have gone; personnel costs in the form of wages, benefits, and more staff. The idea that schools cannot (or will not) change without resources specifically targeted to the change in question should not be accepted at face value. We believe that the linkage between funding and reform is imprecise. Creating a context for reform may be just as important as providing resources.

For some teachers, change may be moving from the abstract to the concrete. Generalized frustration with education, which might have led to an openness to reform, may be replaced by a more sober appraisal of what will be required to change. This reexamination may be leading some teachers to exert greater caution in their assessment of the need to change schooling.

Combined with this is a distinct lack of clear signals regarding reform at the district level, which sends teachers mixed messages. Few superintendents have stated unequivocal support for H.B. 3565; most continue to wait and see. This affects both the amount and type of information that is disseminated and the planning that takes place in districts. Absent district direction, teachers and principals must rely on the state or other organizations for guidance.

There is evidence that schools are doing just this, organizing themselves into ad hoc networks for the purpose of supporting reform. There are currently a half-dozen such networks with varying degrees of overlapping membership within the state that are separate from any

demonstration projects organized and funded by the Department of Education. These provide the meaning and interpretation lacking at the district level. These schools may have more in common with one another than with their neighbors within the district. Supporting and nurturing these networks may be crucial to the long-term implementation of educational reform.

It is somewhat remarkable that response patterns are in the stable to somewhat more positive range given the gloomy fiscal environment combined with the lack of clear guidelines from the State Board of Education for the CIM and CAM, the centerpieces of the law. Schools still do not know the standards, the assessments, the performance levels, or even the parameters for the educational program that will prepare students for the certificates. Those who support reform are being forced, to some degree, to invent their own solutions and set their own rules. They wonder if they will be punished subsequently for forging ahead.

Some substantial minority of educators, perhaps a third, have actively engaged with reform. Many of the rest may be holding their judgment (and perhaps their energy) until some of the more basic issues regarding funding and time are resolved. What appears to exist currently is a policy "vacuum" of sorts, where no one entity or group is capable of stepping in alone to define education reform. In such an environment conservative institutions such as schools can reasonably be expected to await further guidance and direction before proceeding.

What Might the Future Hold In Store?

As psychologically overburdened teachers define reform as "one more cross to bear," their concerns and resistance could have an impact within the school and community out of proportion to their actual numbers. The

susceptibility of public education to small interest groups with strong feelings has been documented (Kirst, 1984). These teachers meet those criteria. Reform may not be a "majority rules" type of activity. Even if most teachers believe that many of the elements of the law will improve student learning, the strength of emotion among opponents combined with a more general feeling of malaise and frustration among teachers could combine to exert a powerful restraining influence on education reform at the building level.

Our findings here confirm for us earlier observations regarding site-level educational restructuring; that it is a school-by-school process, and that the variation in how change occurs at each school generally exceeds the commonalties. We have described elsewhere what we label as "non-standardized solutions" to educational reform (Goldman, Dunlap, & Conley, 1993). We note again the importance of this non-standardization.

Policy Coherence and Education Reform

How might this study inform the notion of policy coherence as a tool for systems-level education reform? It seems clear to us that the static present in the system, created by fiscal uncertainty and lack of resources, has had an effect. There have been other important areas lacking coherence that likely have created, or at least abetted, confusion in the system. For example, the state has not changed from the current evaluation system based on achievement testing (and a trait analysis writing exam). While this was not cited by respondents as a major factor in their perceptions of education reform, it clearly sends mixed messages and teachers question when (or whether) the standardized tests will be removed.

House Bill 3565 alerts us to one other dilemma regarding systemic reform and policy coherence. As the reform becomes more complex and

systemic, the amount of ambiguity increases. It is impossible to anticipate all the ramifications of even a simple piece of legislation; this problem compounds itself many times over in a law that provides only several sentences to describe entirely new educational structures. The participants in the system are left to reinvent it. This "top-down" stimulus is supposed to create a "bottom-up" solution. However, what becomes clear is that there are few in this pyramid analogy who currently think broadly about systems solutions. Most quite naturally interpret change in a transactional fashion; will they be net winners or losers?

These myriad micro interpretations overwhelm those who are charged with guiding the development process. They are unable to articulate a clear, unambiguous vision or path for turning the framework created in the legislation into a blueprint for action that will unify the efforts of disparate interest groups. These groups meanwhile continue to actively interpret and invent their own partial solutions. Those with access to policy levers, such as the state board of education and department of education staffers, are quickly overwhelmed by the complexity and ambiguity of a task that had at one time seemed so clear and straightforward. The policy development arena becomes quickly cluttered and fragmented as various groups jockey for influence, promote their own visions of education, or, more effectively, raise a series of operational and procedural concerns for which the vision implementors do not have responses or plans.

The individuals in these policy agencies quickly become targets; they come to personify a reform movement that is without owners. Policy coherence is abandoned in favor of political accommodation. Interpretations change frequently based on the pressures of the hour. There is no consensus, since the "bottom-up" development process never truly includes

(nor can it ever include) a significant number of constituents (although it may contain representatives of all power groups). The reforms begin to be reinterpreted into functional equivalents of some current mechanism or structure.

Teachers have a difficult time taking ownership for reform in the abstract in such an environment. Instead, they view it through the lens of their own buildings and their own needs. They take what they need, adapt what they can, and wait for the rest to be defined or to go away. This highly functional approach, which results in the non-standardization to which we have referred, also results in a lack of a systems perspective on change. Education is not reinvented; it is reiterated. We see once more the incrementalism and "muddling through" to which Lindblom alerted us (Lindblom, 1959; Lindblom, 1969; Quinn, 1980).

At the same time the rhetorical "sonic boom" of systemic change generates shock waves of resistance both within and outside of the schools. The magnitude of change being proposed startles and alarms as it seems to approach out of the blue. No one understands why schools are being changed when everything seems to be more or less all right. And, in any event, there are pressing fiscal issues which require more immediate attention. Why, educators and the public ask, are we even contemplating reform at a time like this when there is so much uncertainty? Reform is caught in the vice of policy incoherence.

Education reform in Oregon appears to be in such a predicament. As this paper is being written, active opposition to reform is crystallizing in the form of a group that is mounting a campaign to repeal the legislation.

Conclusion

These data suggest that, at least between Fall 1992 and Fall 1993, there has been no major change in Oregon educators' attitudes about the school restructuring legislation passed in 1991. Statewide factors that would affect all schools, such as the deteriorating fiscal situation, appeared not to have any pervasive or systematic impact on beliefs about change or about the likely consequences of fully implementing H.B. 3565. Similarly, time by itself did not have an impact: the data do not lend themselves to the interpretation that there is either increased acceptance or a groundswell of resistance.

These data present a picture more than anything else of a system being pulled in contradictory directions, and educators trying to make sense out of the contradictions. While many responses suggest a greater accommodation of reform by educators, there is no clear, unequivocal direction in which education reform can be said to be moving at this time.

These findings suggest that there are some limits to how far a state Legislature and state Department of Education can push mandated reform down to all schools and into the hearts and minds of educational professionals, particularly when the levers of educational policy are not arrayed systematically to support the reforms.

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Appendix A

Question:	Context Variable:
1. What aspects of your faculty's makeup lend themselves towards support for reform? Against support for reform? Please consider the following factors: Gender, age, years in building, years in education.	Faculty variables
2. Do teachers here believe they can change the educational environment to enhance student success?	Teacher efficacy
3. How does the type of students you have affect the way the faculty view educational reform?	Student inputs
4. How does the type of parents you have affect the way the faculty view educational reform?	Parental support
5. How does the type of community in which your school exists affect the way the faculty view educational reform?	Community context
6. Have cuts in funding impacted your ability to support reform? How?	Fiscal context
7. Is there anything in the history of this school that has an effect or influence on people's attitude toward H.B. 3565 and reform?	Historical context
8. When you think of the culture of this school, the norms, beliefs, customs, and traditions, do you see these influencing responses to H.B. 3565 and reform? If so, how?	Cultural context
9. How stable has leadership been at this school? Has this had any effect on attitudes toward reform and H.B. 3565?	Leadership continuity
10. Has the principal's leadership style had any effect on individual and school wide responses to H.B. 3565 and school reform? If so, what aspects of leadership style were most important and why?	Leadership style
11. How available is professional development related to school reform? Has availability influenced responses to school reform and H.B. 3565?	Availability of professional development
12. How important has the issue of time been in determining responses to school reform and H.B. 3565?	Time
13. Has there been any sort of critical event that has strongly affected or shaped responses to school reform in this building? If so, what was it and what was its effect?	Critical event
14. To what degree do teachers here collaborate vs. work in isolation. How does this affect attitudes toward reform?	Collaboration norms

15. To what degree would you describe this school as adaptable and responsive to demands from outside the school? To what degree is it inflexible and unadaptive?	Bureaucratic tendencies
16. Does the school interact with its surrounding community (e.g., use volunteers, have programs in the community, have community members on many committees, work collaboratively with other governmental agencies)?	Open/closed system tendencies

Thank you for discussing these issues with us. Now please take a minute and rank-order (1 = most important, = least important) the following items to describe how influential each is in shaping this school's response to educational reform and H.B. 3565.

Context Variable:	**Rank order: (1 = most important, 16 = least important)**
Faculty age, experience, and gender	
Teacher ability to shape learning environment in order to be successful with students	
Types of student at school	
Parental support for school	
Community involvement in and attitudes toward school	
Fiscal resources	
History of school	
Culture of school (norms, beliefs, interaction patterns, customs)	
Stability or instability of leadership	
Leadership style of principal	
Availability of professional development	
Time	
A critical event	
Degree of teacher collaboration	
Flexibility and adaptability of school	
School's interaction with world outside of the school	